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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/633,604	08/07/2000	Markus Graulich	DE919990051	2697

7590

01/08/2004

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EXAMINER

CARTER, AARON W

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2625

DATE MAILED: 01/08/2004

9

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/633,604

Applicant(s)

GRAULICH ET AL.

Examiner

Aaron W Carter

Art Unit

2625

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 28 October 2003.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 07 August 2000 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1. This action is responsive to papers filed on October 28, 2003.

Response to Amendment

2. In response to applicant's amendment received on October 28, 2003, all requested changes to the specification and claims have been entered.

Response to Arguments

3. Applicant's arguments, see paper number 8, page 6, lines 15-18, filed October 28, 2003, with respect to the rejection(s) of claim(s) 1, 8 and 15 under 35 USC 102(e) and claims 2, 3, 9 and 10 under 35 USC 103(a) have been fully considered and are persuasive. Therefore, the rejection has been withdrawn, as well as, rejection of claims 3 and 10 under 35 USC 112(2nd). However, upon further consideration, a new ground(s) of rejection is made in view of US Patent 6,665,422 to Seidel et al. Please refer to new rejections below.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

4. Claims 1-3, 8-10 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by US Patent 6,665,422 to Seidel et al. ("Seidel").

As to claims 1, 8, and 15, Seidel discloses a computer-based method for use in accordance with an automatic mail-sorting machine, the method comprising the steps of:

Scanning a piece of post mail in accordance with an address block locating (ABL) system for locating one or more address blocks on the piece of post mail (column 3, lines 40-41, wherein locating a region of interest corresponds to ABL);

Analyzing the one or more located address blocks in accordance with an optical character recognition (OCR) system (column 3, lines 42-44); and

Providing a coupling between the ABL system and the OCR system capable of feeding one or more results associated with the ABL system as an input to the OCR system and one or more results associated with the OCR system as an input to the ABL system (column 3, lines 41-67, wherein a ROI is located and provided as input to the OCR, if no distribution info is found, it is inherent that the OCR send a message as input to the ROI locator which then further locates ROI's).

As to claims 2 and 9, Seidel discloses the method of claim 1, wherein the coupling is provided such that the ABL system scans for a further address block when no ZIP code could be extracted by the OCR system from the current address block currently being analyzed (column 3, lines 3-6 and 44-45).

As to claims 3 and 10, Seidel discloses the method of claim 1, wherein a type of information that is evaluated in deciding whether the ABL system scans for a further address block is a least one of:

- (i) confidence of the OCR result relating to the current address block just analyzed;
- (ii) address block content information (column 3, lines 3-6 and 44-45);
- (iii) confidence of the ABL result relating to the current address block just localized;
- (iv) data retrievable by a sort plan associated with a site of the automated sorting machine;
- (v) postmark information retrievable from a postmark; and
- (vi) knowledge-based information derivable from at least one of the types of information in (i) through (v).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 4-7 and 11-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Seidel as applied to claims 1, 8, and 15 above, and further in view of USPN 6,028,956 to Shustorovich et al. ("Shustorovich").

As to claims 4, 7, 11, and 14, Seidel discloses the method/apparatus of claims 1 and 8, but neglects to explicitly disclose that the step of providing a coupling between the ABL system and the OCR system in which the ABL system continues to scan for further potential address blocks after having found at least one potential address block while the at least one potential address block is being processed by the OCR. However, Shustorovich discloses a method of using a segments a portion of an image in which an object of interest is located, send the segment to a recognition process and while the recognition process is running a new object is being located and segmented (column 20, lines 46-65). Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the invention of Seidel with the teachings of Shustorovich. This would provide the invention with the capability to run the ABL, send a candidate block to the OCR and while the OCR is performing recognition, the ABL is searching for another candidate block. Shustorovich further teaches that this method provides expedite processing thus decreasing delay.

As to claims 5 and 12, the combination of Seidel and Shustorovich disclose the method/apparatus of claims 4 and 11, Seidel further discloses a step of providing a ranking for each of the address blocks, being at least one of located and analyzed, for finding the most probable destination address block (column 3, lines 49-51, wherein the operator ranks the ROI's and selects the one with the majority of address block content information).

As to claims 6 and 13, the combination of Seidel and Shustorovich disclose the method/apparatus of claims 5 and 12, Seidel further discloses wherein a type of information that the ranking is based on is at least one of:

- (i) confidence of the OCR result relating to each of the address blocks;
- (ii) address block content information ((column 3, lines 49-51, wherein the operator ranks the ROI's and selects the one with the majority of address block content information));
- (iii) confidence of the ABL result relating to the current address block just localized;
- (iv) data retrievable by a sort plan associated with a site of the automated sorting machine;
- (v) postmark information retrievable from a postmark; and
- (vi) knowledge-based information derivable from at least one of the types of information in (i) through (v).

Conclusion

7. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

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Contact Information

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Aaron W. Carter whose telephone number is 703.306.4060. The examiner can normally be reached by telephone between 8am - 4:30pm (Mon. - Fri.).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Bhavesh Mehta can be reached on 703.308.5246. The fax phone number for the organization where the application or proceeding is assigned is 703.872.9306 for regular communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703.306.0377.

Awc
awc
January 2, 2004

Aaron W. Carter
Examiner
Art Unit 2625

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jayanti K. Patel', written over a horizontal line.

Jayanti K. Patel
Primary Examiner